

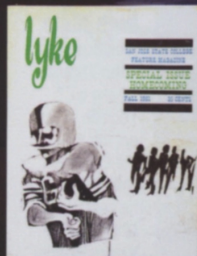


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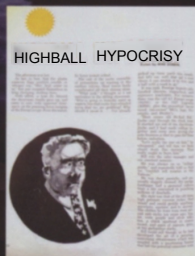
# Salt in their Shorts!

In Which Our Heroes Round the Forbidding Outer Reaches of the Farallon Islands and Later Row into the Mysterious Cave of the Albino Sea Lion in the Channel Islands.

Michael Dobrin



Fall 1961 Lyke also featured Football Dave Brubeck Two Lyke Dolls: Sharon Dalkey of San Jose Sue Berry of Stockton



Painted Cave, Santa Cruz Island (111) photo

When we see O'D in the venerable and venerated pages of the dear *Rat Line* journal, he's the sharp-dressed man on the manicured 19th hole, he's with collectors and connoisseurs on the greensward at Pebble Beach Concours d'Elegance; we catch him savoring a lovely red in sunny Italy or touring the castles and green fields of the Oulde Sod.

He's our man at the Spartan tail-gater or at a salubrious South 11th Street reunion.

What's probably not so well known about O'D is that he has salt in his shorts - lots o salt. Patrick is a waterman extraordinaire — and we've shared a couple of blue water adventures. Like the two of us rounding the far side of the forbidding Farallon Islands (27 miles west of the Golden Gate) in my engineless 29' sloop, *Alithia*.

That adventure happened in April, 1974, but I've come to realize now in rewinding the *Way Back Machine* that O'D and I have been tethered to a number of important way points on the long journey - along with a host of other SJS homies. Some of the best remembrances with O'D, however, were those in which we fulfilled "Water Rat's" line to "Mole" in Kenneth Graeham's *Wind in the Willows*, "There is nothing — absolutely nothing - half so much doing as simply messing about in boats."

Going backside around the Farallons, however, is a bit more than "messing about," it's bloody dangerous.

In April, 2012, five experienced San Francisco Bay sailors lost their lives when the yacht *Low Speed Chase*, lagging behind the returning fleet late in the day, rounded too close and crashed into the rocks. In 1982, four sailors lost their lives rounding in the Double-handed Farallones race. In 2010 a

group was rescued when their boat closed too close.

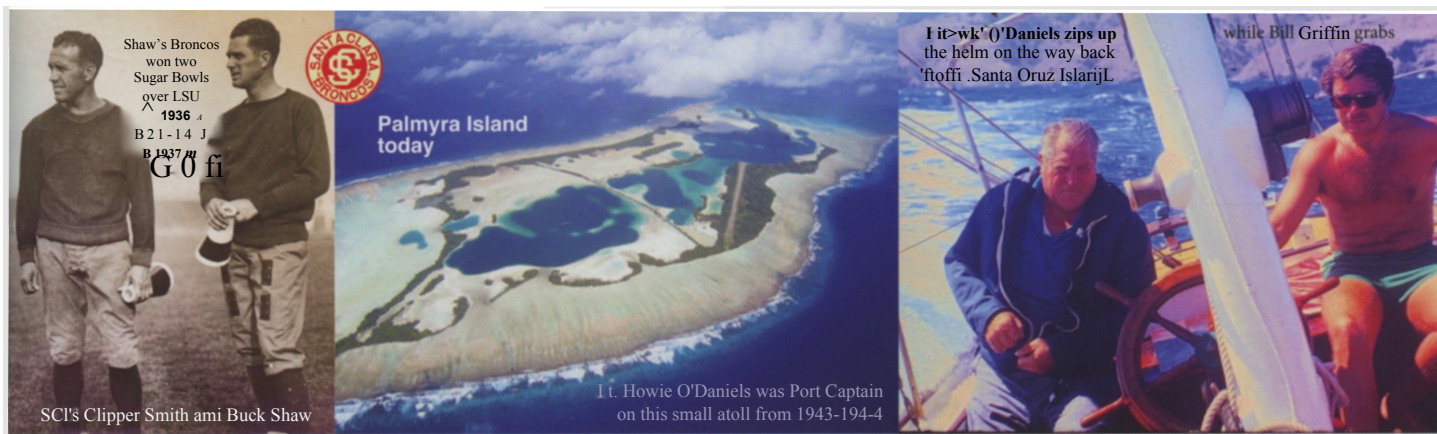
St. Francis Yacht Club Commodore, ocean sailor and author Kimball Livingston - a friend of both of ours - wrote this after the 2012 tragedy:

"Rounding the Farallon Islands, you are truly in an 'other place.' It's a moonscape. Rocks rising up. It's spectacular and awe-inspiring. You just don't want to get close."

O'D came by his love of sailing and generally messing about in boats no doubt through his father, Howard Robert O'Daniels, a titan of American football and college athletic endeavors whose name—as Howie O'Daniels — will forever be in chiseled into the athletic archives of the Cal Poly Mustangs. As head football coach from '33 to '41 and again '46 and '47, he established a 56-33-6 (six ties?) .621 record. He coached baseball and basketball and track and field. He helped form the California Collegiate Athletic Association in 1938.

Two of his charges went on to become powerhouse movers in American athletics, the first a rather ragged lineman named John Madden—and the other, Madden's roommate on the road, Pat Lovell. Lovell passed in Santa Cruz in November, 2018, at 81. From Redwood City's Sequoia High, Lovell was a heavyweight collegiate wrestling champ, heavyweight finalist with the 1964 "Olympic team, a lifelong teacher, coach, official and Commissioner of the Santa Cruz Coast Athletic League.

Born in 1908 in West Seattle, O'Daniels Sr. no doubt developed his love of life under sail on the waters of Puget Sound. After high school he went to Santa Clara University, where he majored in accounting and played for legendary coaches Adam Walsh, Buck Shaw and Clipper Smith. After the



1929 Broncos's 13-7 upset of 1-loss Stanford (0-7 to USC) Pop Warner himself said that O'Daniels was "one the best tackles I ever saw." He is a member of the Santa Clara Hall of Fame and Cal Poly's HOF as a coach.

As with most SJS graduates from the '50s and '60s, our parents were part of Tom Brokaw's "*Greatest Generation*". When the call came, the war demanded sacrifice and they were ready.

There's a photo in O'D's latest Christmas card of a tall, lean, muscular Lt. Howie O'Daniels on Palmyra Island in December, 1943. He's in shorts and toting a recently speared and stupendously large barracuda.

What was he doing in Palmyra, a remote atoll in the Pacific, 1,200 miles south of the Hawaiian chain and one-third the way along the Line Island route to American Samoa?

"He was the Port Captain," O'D recalls. "A lieutenant in the U.S. Navy Reserve. When the war broke out, a lot of coaches on the West Coast enlisted in the Navy and were sent to Annapolis to receive their "90-day Wonders" commissions. Coaches included SJS's Walt McPherson, Len Casanova of Oregon and Justin "Sam" Barry of USC. They were sent to Corpus Christi, Texas to train and condition Navy pilots and teach them hand-to-hand combat."

"Three families, Casanova's McPherson and ours shared a two-story house until base housing was available. We came home when my father was shipped to Palmyra. My mother received a letter from dad that she didn't understand. It closed by saying, '*Say hello to my pal Myra!*' A Navy veteran decoded it. My dad was a founding member of the San Luis YC which the Navy took over on December 8, 1941. So

my dad's experience around boats might've helped secure his posting at Palmyra."

Palmyra was a major U.S. air staging, supply and radio communications base during the war—and beyond.

Three decades after Howie O'Daniels had left Palmyra, the remote atoll was also the locale of a lurid murder mystery and yacht theft, which was painstakingly documented by former LA District



**Howie O'D's Dec. 1943 barracuda**  
Photo hangs at Legends in Morro Bay

Attorney Vincent Bugliosi and co-author Bruce Henderson in their 1991 book, "*And the Sea Shall Tell...*" (See SeanMunger.com)

After the war, O'Daniels returned to coaching at Cal Poly—but he never lost his interest in boats.

"In '48 or '49 I remember my dad and his buddies building twelve Geary 18 'Flatties' in the basement of a local grammar school. Nobody knew whose boat was whose - they were identical: mahogany transom, plywood hull, centerboard. There were Geary 18 racing fleets in San Diego, LA, San Luis, Portland and British Columbia."

The Geary 18 is also linked to O'Daniels' life in the Seattle Area. The flat-bottomed, simple and fast one design craft was created by noted Seattle marine architect Ted

Geary as a monospec racer in 1928 for the Seattle Yacht Club.

O'D took on some serious salt water himself in one of his first solo sails—this across the harbor mouth at Morro Bay in a 10' El Toro pram. For those who've managed to escape the dreaded salt water sailing rash, the El Toro is to elemental sailing as is "Mary Had a Little Lamb" to first piano lessons. At ten feet and without a comfortable position in any part of a hard-chined and tiny cockpit, the little "Bull-ship" is unforgiving and tippy. But if one pays attention and gets the elements of sail trim (main and jib) and rudder lessons in balance, one can learn the elements of reach, run, downwind gybe and point to windward. Every El Toro sailor has gone overboard - so did O'D.

"My dad and mom took us to Morro Bay and we launched the El Toro. I was about 11 sailing by the point by myself and I wrapped the excess main sheet around my wrist. As I crossed the harbor mouth I got knocked down by a gust and couldn't release the sail. My dad was on shore and yelled to jump in, hold on to the main sheet and the boat itself and kick it all the way in to shore."

O'Daniels' sailing horizons greatly expanded with Howie's 1964 purchase of the elegant 45' ketch *Nereid*. "She was built at the Casey Boatworks in Fairhaven, Mass, in 1933," O'D says, "and the number 33 would be significant in my dad's life. He played with number 33 at Santa Clara, was named head football coach at Cal Poly in 1933 and was 33 years old when I was born."

*Nereid* below had an elegant mahogany interior—a butterfly table in the main salon, Pullman sink in the forward head, beautiful and functional cupboards. She is featured in a September 1976 issue of *Sailing* magazine that O'D wrote.

Howie O'Daniels, who passed in 1991 (O'D's mom, Mary, passed in 1996), owned *Nereid* until 1985 and put thousands of blue water miles under her keel. O'D mostly remembers cruises to the Channel Islands. His dad took on big ocean racing challenges, competing in Balboa YC's sometimes harrowing offshore dashes around Guadalupe Island in Mexico.

He did really well in these events, placing high in the infamous 1979 LaPaz race. The winds were so strong the yachties named the race the "*Mexican Fastnet*." That same year, the traditional 600-mile Fastnet sailing regatta off the coast of southern England was struck by a monster storm and 15 sailors lost their lives among the dozens of yachts sunk or destroyed.

It was also in '79 that the fully crewed *Nereid* placed third in the grand show of classic yachts on San Francisco Bay, the annual Master Mariner's Regatta.

Unfortunately, *Nereid* came to an ignoble end at Port San Luis on the California coast. Her third owner had all but abandoned the lovely old yacht and one Labor Day about six years ago she was overtaken by as many as 50 sea lions who had come on deck because the owner had scrapped the stainless steel that held her lifelines. She sunk into the bay west of the Cal Poly pier.

My first waypoint crossing with O'D took place in 1961 when I submitted a semi-fictional article to SJS' expanded "lifestyle" magazine, *Lyke*. O'D was the editor, a seemingly serious fellow who said, yes, he'd take the piece, "Highball Hypocrisy," about a used imported and sports car dealer in San Jose who hated college kids ("Pinko Commie brats") - but delighted in all manner of deceptions during the buy-



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A Colombia 51 surfs past us on the return leg to the Golden Gate. Dobrin photo



L. Francis Herreshoff 1924 gaff schooner, 2001 Benjamin Mendlowitz

**Lyke used student artists, models and writers. Ads were designed & produced with only student models and photographers.**

continued from page 13

ing process with any of them. First magazine piece I had published. Sixty plus years on, still freelancing to print (remember print?) publications. Anything from American motoring history to Arctic exploration.

O'D moved *Lyke*, a former poetry magazine, into prominence among college journals, certainly rivaling the Stanford Chaparral, the Texas Ranger and the Cal Pelican. *Lyke* had a lively format of articles, profiles, cartoons (many by Patrick himself) superb layout and photographs - and very tasteful and alluring images of San Jose States beautiful young women.

He expanded the concept of personality, continuing to include interviews and photographs of contemporary cultural icons Mort Sahl, Lenny Bruce (canceled when arrested in SF) Louis Armstrong, Ray Charles, Dave Brubeck, following earlier interviews with author Eugene Burdick, Buster Keaton—even Billy Graham. Under O'D's hand, *Lyke* captured the free-wheelin' Surfrider and RF House lifestyle on San Jose's South 11th St. and beyond.

"Yeah, I was probably influenced by *Playboy*, " he admits "But I wanted this to be a student publication. Students went out and sold, modeled and produced the ads. We did our own photography. We exchanged cartoons with other college publications."

Some of these were done by prominent American illustrator - sculptor Bruce Wolfe, who was on the *Lyke* team and later joined O'D

interning in the ad agency business in San Francisco. (But Foote Cone & Belding, recognizing his talents, wouldn't let Bruce go back for his senior year. Pay was too good.)

"I remember one night we were working late laying out the magazine in the journalism building. Our crew was hungry and I sent out for pizza and beer—but a janitor came over and said no beer in the building, so we took the whole magazine to my house—380 South 11th—and laid out the entire issue on our dining room table from the demolished ATQ house."

At about this time, too, O'D had another waypoint crossing, this with a Phi Sig Terry Klaus, who was a roommate for a semester and who worked on San Francisco Bay's Red & White Fleet (he eventually became fleet captain). In the 70s Klaus bought the illustrious and lovely 65' Herreshoff schooner *Brigadoon*, built in Massachusetts in 1924 and sailed to San Francisco Bay by oceanic wanderer/author/film star Sterling Hayden. Klaus and O'D would come together later as key curators of San Francisco Bay's maritime heritage via the annual showcase of sailing elegance, history and competition in the Master Master's Regatta — Klaus as skipper, O'D as dedicated promoter, publicist, photographer, and historian. He also kindled a friendship with another seasoned mariner, Bob Hanelt, (Albany HS, CMA) who was eventually to become a master aboard Delta Line freighters calling at South American ports. In '71-'74 Bob and Kristi Hanelt circumnavigated the globe in the elegant 53' Sparkman 8c Stephens 1937 yawl. *Skylark*, another Master Mariner's mainstay competitor. That cruise would be documented in monthly installments in the magazine *American Boating*, which brought O'D and I together

later in the journey.

The Real Fine life at San Jose State ended. Graduation. Jobs. New places. New friends. But there continued to be a consistent weave between our careers..

I moved to The City and eventually shared living space with SJS and high school buds DU Bob Brady, Jimmy Videle and the always elegant and stylish Phi Sigma Kappa Don Mastrangelo—known in some circles as Mr. *Six O'clock*. For comparison it will shock our kids to know that housing in SF was once very inexpensive. When solo, I had a two room flat off Van Ness for \$125/mo (Oh, yes, my first move to the City was a one room flat in the basement of a Chinatown tenement. \$75. Did not last long).

Early '60s. Seemed like there always a gig. I started as a publicist for a promoter who had the Imported Car Show account, then to the *SF Chronicle* promotion dept.

Mastrangelo had recruited O'D in the summer of '64 to a SF advertising and publishing company while he was still living in San Jose at the Rats Nest II on So. 15th. O'D had to commute by train.

Next stop—editor/publicist for SF agency handling regional Sports Car Club of America. Agency partner Russ Goebel (the agency was *Finefrock, Bice & Goebel*) broke away in '64 to create a publishing empire—*Competition Press & Autoweek*—first at 15 Boardman Place, then to Lafayette, CA (O'D was Goebel's production and design manager) then up to Reno. A decade later O'D and I would reunite in Alameda to produce one of Goebel's creations, the aforementioned *American Boating*, and the venerable SF boating monthly. *Bay & Delta Yachtsman*.

More salt to come but first there was a hiatus for a cycling trip in Europe and editorial posting in Los



Mastrangelo Mr. *Six O'Clock*"

Angeles with the *National Hot Rod Association*. Don Mastrangelo was the marketing and brand manager at NHRA's old downtown offices. Don lived right on the Strand in Manhattan Beach—"Oh, Cisco, oh Panchol!"

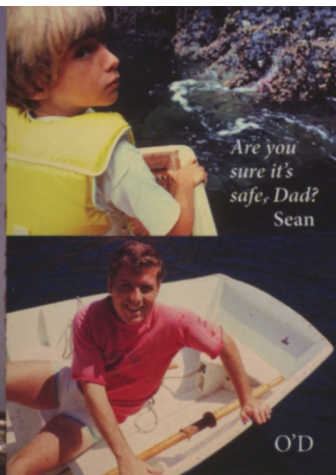
In '69 I started getting serious about sailing. I'd come back to the Bay Area, joined a large corporation—then realized that, no, this wasn't going to work long haul.

I took El Toro lessons with the *Bullship* champion of all time—Jim Warfield. Soon I was crewing with Brian McCarthy aboard his *Santana 22* racing sloop out of Richmond Yacht Club. The *Santana 22* is a light, fast, quite simple racing sloop with very active racing fleets. The *Santana 22* is also a very wet ride—and I was McCarthy's high side ballast, flopping between port and starboard with every tack. Foul weather gear was not very effective when pounded by surge after surge of green water. But San Francisco Bay is a great teacher; it easily one of the world's most challenging bodies of water and has generated some of the world's best champion

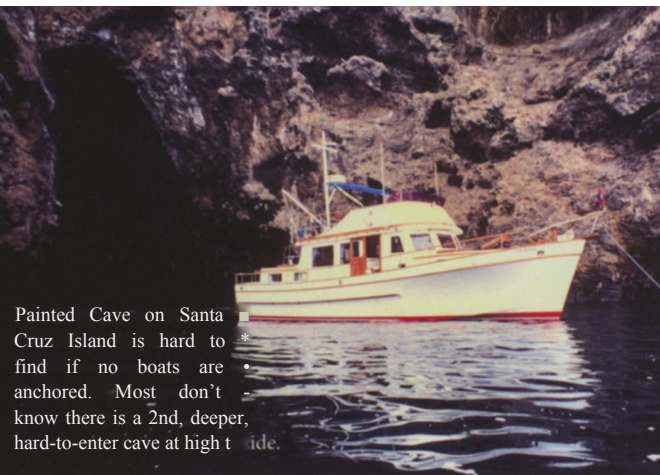




Palmer Johnson 43 *Alegre* heads to the Gate. Dobrin photo



Note Pat's 1964 Awful-Awful Saloon shirt.



Painted Cave on Santa Cruz Island is hard to find if no boats are anchored. Most don't know there is a 2nd, deeper, hard-to-enter cave at high tide.

sailors in every level of offshore and onshore competition. We took a seasonal fourth in fleet.

**T**ime, place and circumstance in perfect alignment, I decided in '69 to jump ship and sail to Tahiti. Yes I did it—and with five others on the 42' sloop *Blanquita*. I came home with gnarled feet from hiking barefoot in the back trails and coral reefs of the Marquesas, Tuamotus and Societies. That's a long story, one that also ends up with a murder and intrigue in the South Pacific.

New directions in 1970. PR director at the Oakland Museum, which is but a mile from the Oakland Estuary. Job. Sailboat five minutes away. Cruisin' the Estuary—and—beyond.

*Alithia* turned out to be a far, far better boat than I'd ever anticipated. A five-ton 29' sloop, she was designed and built in the '60s by East Hamptons marine architect Richard Carlson. In the industry's transformation from wood construction to fiberglass, Carlson struck a compromise: *Alithia* was built of Iroko strip planking. Iroko is a very dense West African hardwood. In this technique, strips of Iroko were hand-laid, glued, edge nailed and affixed to the sloop's hefty frames.

She had a heavy fin keel and a simple sloop rig with winches and lines leading to a self draining cockpit. Her sail inventory was pretty simple—small storm jib to billowing genoa up from and reefing main sail. Under shortened sail, the sloop was able to make way in very nasty conditions. I'd gained confidence by sailing to Monterey and Half Moon Bay and back - but the Farallons would be the most challenging.

By the mid-70s O'D and I were united again as editor and design-

er-graphics-production-master for two boating publications in Alameda—*American Boating* and *Bay & Delta Yachtsman*, which was owned then by Ken Shaff and Bud Chamberlain. We were immersed in every facet of boating, O'D was the graphics, design and production whiz; I was the editor. To cover the '74 Farallons race, we came up with idea of actually *covering* the race: going offshore with camera and notebook instead of just gathering up the post-race results from the yacht racing association.

We overnighted to a berth at Sausalito YC and without an engine caught the 5 a.m. ebb tide out the Gate, leaving far in front of the racing yachts. We had full moon and mild weather as we ghosted under the Golden Gate Bridge. Sailing into the setting moon made the huge swells in the shipping channel appear as steep walls of water. Fearful of being stalled in a trough, we only tacked when on top of a swell. By midmorning, the winds picked up and we could see the Farallons as tiny spikes on the tumbling blue horizon.

Scudding along on a point tack, *Alithia* pounded, dove and skimmed her way to the rocks ahead; soon we were rounding with the racing fleet, a two-man crew in a small, simple sloop that garnered waves and thumbs up from competing yachts, some with fully outfit crews—as many as eight aboard the larger yachts. We rounded at midday—and now the hard part: we would have to keep driving, crossing the Potato Patch Shoal and make the flood back into the Bay.

A monster whale sounded right next to *Alithia's* beam, its flukes glistening no more than 20 yards away.

The Potato Patch? Earned its name in the latter part of the 19th century when laden schooners

would be so pounded by the wind, waves and nasty shoaling they'd often jettison (either on purpose, or accidentally) their wares, often *sacks of potatoes*.

The Gulf of the Farallones is dominated by an immense oceanic bar that curves from the coast of Marin to points off northern San Mateo County. It is comprised of a massive, ever-shifting sediment of centuries and in some places rises to points no more than 15 ft. *under the surface*, creating extremely dangerous short, steep and violent waves. The Golden Gate has earned a well-deserved reputation among mariners for centuries.

We were by mid afternoon riding 8-12' breaking swells and *Alithia*, then on a downwind reach, would rise to the crest and swoosh deep into troughs of thundering blue-green water. Scary and exhilarating. Not only did we catch the flood through the Gate, we beat some crewed yachts to the bridge!

But that wasn't our last sailing adventure.

Not too long after the Farallons race, my wife-to-be, Catherine, and I joined O'D and Howie aboard *Nereid* for a trip to the Channel Islands, another crossing that can be dicey. This time not, but Howie O'Daniels had something up his sleeve. It was a lovely and smooth crossing to Santa Cruz Island. We anchored out off Santa Cruz Island and the next day *Nereid* ghosted the coast. At some point Howie throttled back on *Nereid's* engine and gently bent the gracious yacht to port, seemingly into a cliff wall on the island; the wall opened up to a narrow slot in the towering cliffs and soon we were riding a silent surge deep into the mysterious cut. At one point, Howie shut down the engine and set the anchor. We could almost reach out and touch the walls of the oceanic canyon.

We lowered the tender and O'D manned the oars. There were five of us and he deftly dipped and pulled toward the head of the canyon. Gurgling surges bubbled on either side and the sun disappeared. Where was he taking us—there seemed nothing ahead but the abrupt end of the cut?

And then ahead—a dark hole, one that opened and closed with each surge and retreat. Timing his sweeps perfectly, O'D rowed right up to the gap and as the ebb pulled away, he caught a next surge and we drifted into another world.

An immense sea cave. Dripping with moisture and cavernous; the only light entering through the intermittently opening and closing sea gap. Sound echoed and gurgled; there were sea smells. One way in and one way out. And yes, there it was directly in front of us, perched on an outcropping at cave's edge: a huge white sea lion, who barked and snorted at our appearance in his monster chambers. It was so dark that the flash from O'D's camera was eaten by the blackness. The light at the mouth—our only escape—would close abruptly with each surge, then peek in again on the tidal retreat.

A deft oarsman, O'D positioned the dinghy at the cave's mouth and caught an outgoing surge. We ducked our heads and headed into brilliant sunlight.

Life moves along and although O'D and I have stayed in contact, we never again reprised our blue water adventures—but they will always stick as among the most memorable in our long lives on land and sea.

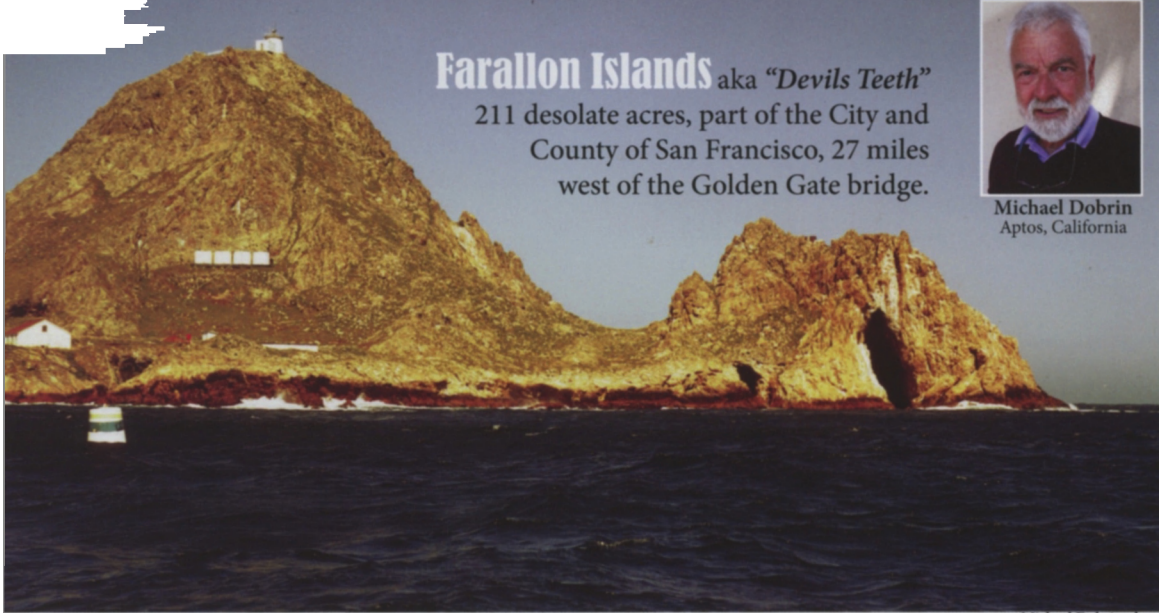
## The engine?

Oh yes, *Alithia's* original engine, a gas job, quit early in my ownership. At one point I'd purchased a

continued on page 20

SJS Rat Line Summer 2019 15





**Farallon Islands** aka "Devils Teeth"  
211 desolate acres, part of the City and  
County of San Francisco, 27 miles  
west of the Golden Gate bridge.



Michael Dobrin  
Aptos, California

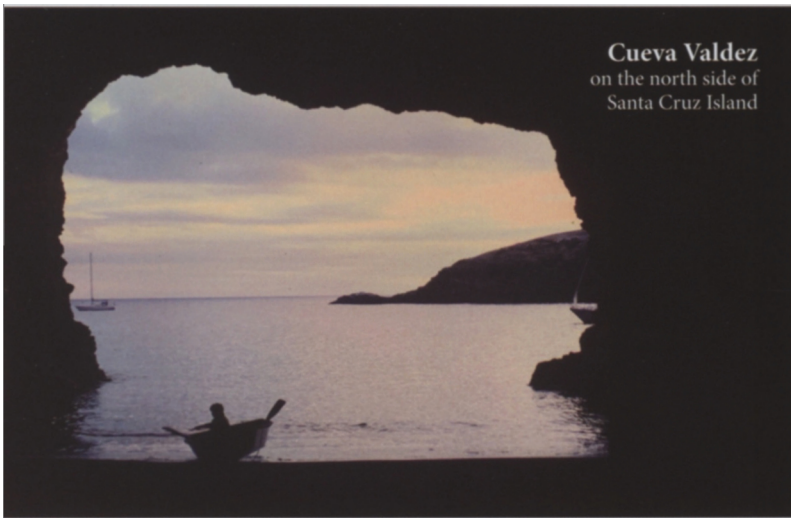
## BRIGADOON



Bob Hanelt  
in front

Cruising on San Francisco Bay.

Michael Dobrin photo



**Cueva Valdez**  
on the north side of  
Santa Cruz Island



Pete  
and  
Lynda  
Snell

"Lynda, I can't move  
the dinghy! What are  
you looking at?  
is iPhones haven't  
BA been invented."



LCDR Howard R. O'Daniels was 35  
when he and other west coast football  
coaches received commissions from  
Annapolis—12 years after he was Santa  
Clara's Hall of Fame Tackle at 178-lbs.



60 Minutes  
Man

20 SJS Rat Line Summer 2019

## Salt in their Shorts!

continued from 15

replacement - a small British Pet-  
ters diesel -and had removed the  
gas clunker. For a short time, the  
engine, in crate, served as a coffee  
table in my living room. But then  
things started to happen: kids, car-  
reer, different perspectives. I never  
did install the diesel and proceed-  
ed for some time to sail her the  
old way - sails alone, just like the  
venerable San Francisco Italian  
fishermen who'd sail their engine-  
less felluca fishing boats on tide and  
wind from as far away as Antioch,  
out to Gate to the fishing grounds  
and back.

And *Alithia*?

I sold her to the late Mark Rudi-  
ger, who became one of the world's  
premier ocean racing tacticians be-  
fore his untimely death at 53 from  
lymphoma.

He sailed *Alithia* to New Zealand.  
Probably with an engine. —MD



Some summers it's both windy and foggy on San Francisco Bay. (Cal 2-34 by O'D)



Howie O'Daniels 1933 45-foot ketch  
"Nereid" off wind in the  
Long Beach YC to La Paz race.